

The Dependent Origination

The law of cause and effect

(*Paticcasamuppada*)

Buddhism always points out the path that how to overcome suffering and achieve liberation. The Buddha's main purpose was explaining the path that leads to get rid of suffering. If someone understands the suffering, he realizes the origin of suffering. If someone realizes the origin of suffering, he understands the cessation of suffering. If someone understands the cessation of suffering, he goes forward on the path that leads to get rid of suffering. When one is realized by a wise person, other steps are also understood by himself.

Above four things, the fourfold noble truth (*Cattariyasaccani*) is based on understanding of the dependent origination (*Paticcasamuppada*). Understanding the dependent origination is like understanding the heart of Buddhism. On the other hand, understanding the four noble truths depends on understanding ignorance. In short the meaning of Ignorance is lack of understanding of cause and effect of suffering. When we experience something through our senses like eye, ear, that experience doesn't come to the present from the past, also that experience doesn't go to future from the present. This is the ultimate truth which happens in the world whether we like or not. Unfortunately, because of lack of comprehension people think that before we experience something, it happened. And also after we experienced, the experience remains. This is the way that the world thinks. This is the ignorance that we have to overcome as much as we are knowledgeable about what the Buddha explained.

In the very early morning, the Buddha got enlightened in Bodh Gaya on the Vesak Full moon day, the supreme Buddha by his wisdom realized and reflected on cause and effect of suffering that the world suffers with decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. At that moment he realized reasons of suffering one by one orderly. There he understood the closest reason of decay (*Jara*), death (*Marana*), sorrow (*Soka*), lamentation (*parideva*), pain (*Dukkha*), grief (*Domanassa*) and despair (*Upayasa*) as birth (*Jati*). Then he analyzed why birth happens. Here he saw the reason of birth as the process of becoming (or existence=*Bhava*). The Buddha again investigated the reason of the process of becoming. He understood the reason of becoming as clinging (*Upadana*). Next he considered the reason of clinging as craving (*Tanha*). After that he realized the reason of craving as sensation (or feeling=*Vedana*). When he reflect on the cause of feeling, he understood the reason of feeling as contact (or impression = *Phassa*). Then he recognized six senses as the cause of contact. Again while he was investigating the reason of six senses, he knew mind and matter (Mentality and corporeality = *Nama Rupa*). When he analyzed the cause of mind and matter, he understood consciousness (*Vinnana*). After that he examined the reason of consciousness as volitional actions (*Sankhara*). Finally he clearly explored that volitional actions arise because of ignorance (*Avijja*). When we are ignorant of

volitional actions other causes of suffering arise like decay, death etc. According to this discovery, the Buddha understood the process of our entire life in the Sansaric Journey. Here we can classify all of them in an order like this;

Through ignorance are conditioned volitional actions or kamma-formations

(Avijja paccaya samkhara).

Through volitional actions is conditioned consciousness

(Samkhara paccaya vinnanam).

Through consciousness are conditioned mental and physical phenomena

(Vinnaya paccaya namarupam).

Through mental and physical phenomena are conditioned the six faculties (i.e., five physical sense-organs and mind)

(Namarupa paccaya salayatanam)

Through the six faculties is conditioned (sensorial and mental) contact.

(Salayatana paccaya phasso)

Through (sensorial and mental) contact is conditioned sensation.

(Phassa paccaya vedana)

Through sensation is conditioned craving.

(Vedana paccaya tanha)

Through craving ('thirst') is conditioned clinging.

(Tanha paccaya upadanam)

Through clinging is conditioned the process of becoming.

(Upadana paccaya bhavo)

Through the process of becoming is conditioned birth.

(Bhava paccaya jati)

Through birth are conditioned decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair

(Jati paccaya jara marana soka parideva dukkha domanassa upayaka)

This discovery can be seen only in a dispensation of a Buddha. It can't be seen in any other religion or philosophy. Buddhism has explained this process using several terms like;

- Ariya Naya* – The theory of the Buddha
- Paticcasamuppada* – The dependent origination
- Hetuphala Dhamma* – The law of cause and effect
- Idappaccayata* – The process of cause and effect

Main deference of Buddhism, when other religions and philosophies are compared, is the theory of cause and effect. All other religions, philosophies and sciences explain their teachings and theories depending on conventional truth. According to the conventional truth before we experience there was a world and also after our experience the world remains. According to the dependent origination in Buddhism where the ultimate truth is explained, before we experience there was no world and also after our experience the world doesn't remain. The experience or the world arises and ceases as the result of conditions are together and separated.

When our eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind contact with external objects such as forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, mental formations, the experience arises at the moment. Simultaneously, five aggregates (form, feelings, perception, mental formation and consciousness) arise when a sense contacts with an object and mind. These five aggregates are the bottom line of our all experiences which we receive through our senses. The nature of these five aggregates is it wasn't here before the experience. And also it doesn't remain after the experience. This is the main teaching that the Buddha realized, discovered and preached to the world to get rid of suffering. The Buddha has explained this theory in various ways in his teachings like this;

When this is, that is (*Asmin sati idam hoti*)

This arising, that arises (*Imassa Uppada idam uppajjati*)

When this is not, that is not (*Asmin asati idam na hoti*)

This ceasing, that ceases (*Imassa nirodha idam nirujjhati*)

Understanding of Buddhism depends on how far we have understood this theory, the dependent origination. If someone has a clear knowledge, he is knowledgeable about suffering. Understanding of suffering causes to understand the four noble truths. If somebody knows suffering as lack of knowledge of this theory, listening to what the Buddha taught he tries to understand the dependent origination, five aggregates and four noble truths as much as he can. And also he always tries to practice the path how to get rid of suffering. Here he has to practice three disciplines. They are;

With the cessation of clinging comes cessation of existence of becoming

(Upadana nirodha bhava nirodho)

With the cessation of existence comes cessation of birth *(Bhava nirodha jati nirodho)*

With the cessation of birth, cessation of decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair comes *(Jati nirodha jara marana soka parideva dukka domanassa upayasa)*

This is the way that the Buddha pointed out to get rid of suffering and achieve the final bliss of liberation. For this result we should dedicate all our things like time, wealth, effort in this time when the Buddha's dispensation has appeared in the world. Actually we were born in this world in this time to attain liberation. Therefore we have to attempt as much as we can. Practicing the deliverance path (*Mokkha Magga*) is the most beneficial thing that we receive throughout our life as intelligent people.

May The Triple Gem Bless You!

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May All Beings Be Well, Happy & Peaceful!

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